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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ROUNDUP,
NOVEMBER 29

1. (U) This is the tenth in a series of weekly election roundups in advance of Kazakhstan's December 4, 2005 presidential elections. Items were drawn primarily from the local press and media.

Poll Shows Nazarbayev Popularity at 76 Percent

2. (U) A recent opinion poll conducted by Kazrating, a pro-government polling agency, indicated that President Nazarbayev's popularity rating stood at 76%. Support for Yerasyly Abylkasymov, Zharmakhan Tuyakbay, and Alikhan Baymenov had fallen to under 10% for each candidate, according to the poll. Half of one percent said they supported Mels Yeleusizov. The poll was conducted over three days and surveyed 1,000 people. Three-fourths of respondents confirmed they would vote.

Office of the Procurator General Praises CEC Efforts

3. (U) A report prepared by the Office of the Procurator General praised the Central Election Committee (CEC) and other government agencies for their efforts in monitoring the election process. The report applauded the openness and high professionalism of the CEC and the effective measures taken by government agencies to ensure the fairness of the upcoming vote. The report also noted that the opposition committed the highest number of electoral law violations, most of which were related to the collection of signatures.

KNB Issues New Warning

4. (U) On November 24, the National Security Committee (KNB) issued a press release stating that "the national security agencies of Kazakhstan will put a stop to any attempts directed against the interests of citizens, society and the state." The statement said that members of public organizations (NFI) were trying to provoke conflict between the government and the opposition by accusing the leadership of the country of pursuing undemocratic policies. "We are checking information about youth groups formed from low category young people, who will be used for participating in so-called active actions." According to KNB sources, two representatives of the Kazakhstani opposition operating in Kyrgyzstan addressed a letter to youth organizations, urging the opposition to victory by organizing a popular uprising.

5. (U) The press release also stressed that some media outlets have without merit regularly published and aired materials discrediting national security agencies. According to the press release, representatives of the For a Just Kazakhstan (FJK) bloc and journalists affiliated with FJK use every opportunity to associate all negative public incidents to the special services.

Independent Monitoring Organization Reports Violations

6. (U) On November 22, the Republican Network of Independent Monitors (RNIM) issued its intermediate report on the election. The RNIM recorded violations of the election law during the signature collection campaign, noting that that election commissions failed to properly inform people about the candidates and the signature collecting campaign. The RNIM report also stated that law enforcement agencies and local authorities had interfered in the election process. According to the report, representatives of local procuracy offices in 13 regions overstepped their authority by reviewing the signature forms of potential presidential candidate Ualikhan Kaysarov. Only the CEC maintained the legal authority to oversee the signature collection campaign.

Opposition Urges CEC to Issue Special Ruling

7. (U) On November 25, the election headquarters of Tuyakbay, Baymenov, and Yeleusizov appealed to the CEC to

pass urgently a special ruling on election procedures to ensure a fair vote. The appeal recommended the CEC

implement several procedures, including placement of posters at the entrance of every polling station with information about voters' rights to use either the e-voting system of paper ballots, timely delivery of election results, and the annulment of a previous CEC ruling on the use of envelopes for paper ballots. The head of Nazarbayev's election headquarters Bakhytzhan Zhumagulov declined to sign the appeal. Abylkasymov's campaign team said they would probably sign the appeal, but needed to discuss the matter internally.

18. (U) On November 28, the CEC adopted a decree reversing the decision to use envelopes during the voting.

International Observers

19. (U) On November 28 the CEC accredited an additional 15 foreign observers and journalists, bringing the total to 1605.

10. (U) On November 18, the CEC, at the behest of the Procurator General, ordered the CIS-EMO group to leave Kazakhstan by November 25. The group appealed to President Nazarbayev to intervene. CIS-EMO claimed that political motives were behind the CEC's decision to revoke the group's accreditation. CIS-EMO issued a preliminary report which documented interference in the election process by government officials and other actors.

Opposition Leader Fined for Insulting College Principal

11. (U) The city court in Semipalatinsk found Tolen Tokhtasynov of "For a Just Kazakhstan" guilty of insulting college principal Marat Mukhamedzhanov. The court ordered Tokhtasynov to pay 48,550 Tenge (\$362) in damages. The incident reportedly occurred during Tuyakbay's election campaign stop in Semipalatinsk.

Otan Party Crying Foul

12. (U) Four unidentified assailants broke into the Otan Party headquarters in the city of Shymkent. The police failed to arrest the culprits. Some party documents were allegedly stolen, but the head of the branch office, Shaltay Myrzakhmetov, could not identify which documents were lost.

13. (U) Nazarbayev's campaign headquarters in Shymkent announced on November 24 that two unidentified people had beaten up a representative of the Otan campaign headquarters in Turkestan, Kakhman Koshkarov. Otan representatives claimed the incident was politically motivated. The local MVD is investigating.

Communist Newspaper Accused of Violating the Law

14. (U) The Procurator General of Karaganda City filed a lawsuit against the editor-in-chief of the Communist of Kazakhstan newspaper for publishing free-of-charge campaign materials in support of Abylkasymov. The People's Communist Party of Kazakhstan denied the accusations, saying that they cannot "pay money to themselves."

Nazarbayev Says Election Process Fair

15. (U) On November 18 in Kiev, Ukraine, President Nazarbayev reiterated that the Government of Kazakhstan was doing everything to hold fair elections. Nazarbayev expressed hope that international observers would assess the elections objectively. When asked if the election issue was raised at his meeting with Ukrainian President Yushenko, Nazarbayev replied that their talks were limited to trade. Kazakhstan is a sufficiently democratic country, said Nazarbayev.

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